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EYES ONLY

NC 47606

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R 101800Z DEC 75
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1794
INFO RUFHOL/AMEMBASSY BONN 6474
RUDTC/AMEMBASSY LONDON 7636
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 8047
RUFNPS/AMEMBASSY PARIS 7884
RUFHJA/USMISSION USBERLIN UNN
RUFHNA/USMISSION NATO 6819
BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 6865

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGSI PFOR,PGOR, US, UR, GE, GW

SUBJECT: FURTHER CONVERSATION WITH ABRASIMOV

REF: BERLIN 6850

1. SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO THE GDR PYOTR ABRASIMOV CAME TO SEE ME FOR FOR ONE HOUR AT HIS INITIATIVE AT THE END OF THE DAY ON DECEMBER 9, ACCOMPANIED BY MINISTER-COUNSELOR GROMYKO AND AN INTERPRETER. THE DCM WAS ALSO PRESENT;
2. AFTER SOME PLEASANTRIES ABRASIMOV TOLD ME THAT HE WISHED TO PROVIDE AN ACCOUNT OF THE CPSU PLENUM WHICH HE HAD ATTENDED AS A MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND SUPREME SOVIET. HE MADE A POINT OF NOTING THAT AMBASSADOR DOBRYNIN HAD NOT BEEN IN MOSCOW.
3. ABRASIMOV APPEARED TO HAVE FOUR TOPICS FOR EMPHASIS AS HE SPOKE OF EVENTS AT THE PLENUM:
A) THE GOOD HEALTH, ENERGY AND VITALITY OF BREZHNEV;
B) CONTINUITY IN SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY AND CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR DETENTE;
C) A SOVIET ECONOMY STRONGER THAN WESTERN PRESS ACCOUNTS WOULD HAVE ONE THIN; AND
D) SALT.
4. ABRASIMOV CITED BREZHNEV'S ENERGY AT THE MOSCOW PLENUM AND HIS PARTICIPATION AT THE PARTY CONGRESS IN WARSAW AS INDICATIONS OF HIS GOOD HEALTH. IN A MAJOR SPEECH ON FOREIGN POLICY AT THE PLENUM BREZHNEV HAD UNDERSCORED SOVIET ADHERENCE TO THE FINAL ACT OF HELSINKI AND TO THE CONTINUING PROCESS OF DETENTE IN EAST-WEST RELATIONS, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE OTHERS WHO WOULD NOT SEEM TO FAVOR

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SUCH PROGRESS," ABRASIMOV SAID THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP RECOGNIZED THAT THERE WOULD SOMETIMES BE STRIDENT PUBLIC DEBATE OF FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES DURING NEXT YEAR'S ELECTION CAMPAIGNS IN THE US AND THE FRG, BUT THE SOVIET UNION WOULD REMAIN ABOVE THE RHETORIC.

5, ABRASIMOV SPOKE VERY POSITIVELY ABOUT THE SOVIET ECONOMY SAYING THAT KOSYGIN HAD MADE A SIGNIFICANT ADDRESS ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS DURING THE PLENUM, THE FIVE-YEAR PLAN JUST COMPLETED WAS THE MOST SUCCESSFUL AND SHOWED THE GREATEST RATE OF GROWTH AND LABOR PRODUCTIVITY OF ANY PLAN SINCE WORLD WAR II. IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR THERE HAD BEEN "SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES" CAUSED BY DROUGHT--BUT NOT TO THE EXTENT INDICATED BY CROP FIGURES "SOME JOURNALISTS HAVE BEEN SUCKING OUT OF THEIR THUMBS," THE SOVIET UNION HAD MET ITS NEEDS, WHICH AMOUNTED TO APPROXIMATELY AN ADDITIONAL 10 PERCENT OF ITS PRODUCTION, BY PURCHASES OF GRAIN FROM THE US, CANADA, AND AUSTRALIA, ABRASIMOV ALSO REFERRED FAVORABLY TO RECENT US/SOVIET BILATERAL AGREEMENTS ON GRAIN AND OIL SAYING THAT EITHER SIDE MIGHT BENEFIT FROM WORLD PRICES AT THE TIME OF DELIVERY.

6, THERE WAS AN UPBEAT QUALITY TO ABRASIMOV'S DESCRIPTION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE PLENUM AND PREPARATIONS FOR THE FEBRUARY 24 PARTY CONGRESS: HE PORTRAYED THE TWIN THEMES OF CONTINUITY AND STABILITY IN FOREIGN POLICY, AND PROGRESS IN THE ECONOMY, AS INTERTWINED.

7, I TOLD ABRASIMOV, AS I DID IN OUR MEETING ON NOVEMBER 29, THAT THE ATTITUDE OF BOTH COUNTRIES TOWARD REACHING AGREEMENT ON SALT WAS THE IMPORTANT ISSUE AND ASKED ABOUT THE SOVIET ATTITUDE.

8, ABRASIMOV REPLIED THAT IN OUR RECENT MEETING I HAD MADE THE STATEMENT THAT THE US HAD ADVANCED CONCRETE PROPOSALS TO WHICH CONCRETE SOVIET RESPONSES WERE DUE. HE TOLD ME HE HAD CHECKED THIS WITH MOSCOW AND THE CONTRARY WAS TRUE; THE SOVIET UNION HAD RESPONDED TO ALL QUESTIONS PUT FORWARD BY THE USG; WITH REGARD TO SALT "IT IS NOW UP TO AMERICA TO MAKE THE NEXT MOVE." IN REPLY TO MY QUESTION HE SAID THAT THE SOVIET UNION REMAINED WILLING TO DISCUSS SALT ISSUES DESPITE DIFFERENCES; THE FUTURE OF A SECURE WORLD WAS AT STAKE

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IN THESE TALKS, THE SOVIET UNION, HOWEVER, EXPECTED THAT SALT WOULD CONTINUE TO BE DISCUSSED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE VLADIVOSTOK AGREEMENT, I SAID THAT I HAD NO INTENTION OF ENGAGING IN A DEBATE OF SALT ISSUES AS I WAS NOT INFORMED IN DETAIL, BUT I WISHED TO EMPHASIZE, ON THE BASIS OF MY OWN EXPERIENCE WITH THESE ISSUES IN EARLIER YEARS, THE GREAT IMPORTANCE THE US ATTACHES TO A SUCCESSFUL, FAIR AND EQUAL OUTCOME OF THESE TALKS. ABRASIMOV AGAIN SAID THE ANSWER WOULD HAVE TO COME FROM THE US.

9. FINALLY, ABRASIMOV CAME TO THE TOPIC THAT EVIDENTLY HE HOPED WOULD PROVIDE SOME INSIGHTS FROM ME. HOW HAD PRESIDENT FORD'S CHINA TRIP GON? THERE WERE CONFLICTING STORIES IN THE PRESS, AND OF COURSE ALL HAD NOTICED THAT NO COMMUNIQUE HAD RESULTED FROM THE PRESIDENT'S STAY IN PEKING, ABRASIMOV FORMULATED HIS QUESTION IN A WAY THAT SHOWED HE HAD COME TO HIS OWN PEJORATIVE ANSWER, I TOLD HIS I KNEW ONLY WHAT I HAD READ OF THE PRESIDENT'S AND SECRETARY KISSINGER'S STATEMENTS, IT HAD BEEN STATED THAT THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE REMAINED THE PROPER AND ADEQUATE BASIS FOR THE PRINCIPLES GOVERNING US/PRC RELATIONS. I DID NOT DOUBT THAT AMBASSADOR DOBRYNIN WOULD BE DISCUSSING THESE MATTERS IN WASHINGTON, A PLACE WHERE THERE WOULD BE MORE INFORMATION THAN I COULD IMPART.

10 IN GOOD HUMOR, ABRASIMOV TOLD ME THAT BECAUSE HE KNEW NEARLY EVERYTHING ABOUT US, HE WISHED US A HAPPY ANNIVERSARY ON THIS DAY, THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE OPENING OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN BERLIN, I THANKED HIM, INWARDLY IMPRESSED BY THE QUALITY OF HIS STAFF WORK, AND WE TOASTED OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

11. COMMENT: I BELIEVE ABRASIMOV INTENDED HIS ACCOUNT OF THE PLENUM TO PROVIDE SOME SUBSTANCE AND AN ELEMENT OF DIALOGUE IN OUR PERSONAL AND OFFICIAL RELATIONS. I HAD TOLD HIM AT OUR EARLIER MEETING THAT I WOULD BE GOING TO LONDON FOR A CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE. HIS REMARKS ABOUT BREZHNEV, SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY AND THE ECONOMY, AND THE ALMOST COSY WAY IN WHICH HE PROVIDED ME AN ACCOUNT OF THE PLENUM, MAY HAVE BEEN INTENDED ALSO FOR THE LONDON AUDIENCE.

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ON SALT HE WAS EMPHASIZING
 THAT IN SOVIET EYES THE NEXT MOVE IS OURS. REGARDING
 THE PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO CHINA, I BELIEVE HE WAS
 REFLECTING SERIOUS CONCERN OVER OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CHINESE
 AND THE POSSIBLE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF
 EVEN A SMALL MEASURE OF US/PRC RAPPROACHMENT ON THE
 SOVIET-US RELATIONSHIP. COOPER